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ORGANIZED PREACHING. II¹

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Preaching on New Year's Sunday

New Year's is an occasion of less importance than Christmas or Easter in the church year; yet it is generally observed, and the preacher must be prepared to give a message appropriate to the event. Certain general considerations are pertinent to the task.

There is a genuine tenderness in the minds of the people in reference to the year that is passed. To the majority, the old year has brought some profound experience to which they are sensitive and which will come before them vividly from the general references to God's ways with men, which will inevitably be made in the course of a timely sermon. This mood insures rather an unusual degree of responsiveness on the occasion of New Year's.

Then there is a chastened reverence in the minds of the people as they contemplate the mystery and the responsibility involved in facing the unknown. Just as the lift of the great mountains and the sight of the vast forest solemnizes and chastens the spirit, so the prospect of the untried way in the coming year refines and elevates the temper of thoughtful people. This insures a readiness to receive a message appropriate to New Year's which makes the preacher's task attractive and relatively easier than usual.

Perhaps the first and most obvious step to take in preparing to preach at New Year's is to survey the past year in order to discover what its especial lesson has been. The significant community changes, the great events or movements of the world, the great personalities that have passed out of earthly life, all these are fruitful fields to pass in review as the preacher thinks on his theme. Out of these must invariably come some principles and lessons that will be made vivid when they are thus associated with events still retained in the memory of the congregation. Whatever the text or subject may be, there will be material at hand for fresh and timely illustration.

The sermon on New Year's will be keyed to the note of hope and courage. The future always ought to be faced by Christians "without fear and with manly hearts." It is an occasion on which the congregation should be heartened. This will not call for a sermon filled with shallow and shouting optimism. The problems and dangers will be recognized; but the greater assurance of faith in God will be brought out clearly. In these days of bewilderment and hesitation the people need especially to be given a new sense of the reality and power of God.

¹ This second section of the study of Organized Preaching, which was begun in the May issue, concludes the occasions generally observed in the church year. In the next number the sermons remaining in the year will be organized around one dominant purpose or truth, in practical illustration of the principles already set forth.

In its practical effect the sermon on New Year's will put clearly the great call of the world at large and of the local community. It will show that there are mighty imperatives in life to which response must be bravely given. Whether it be in the narrow range of personal character building or in the international relationships of the nation there is the same call to undertake with new dash and definiteness the program of Christ for a changed world. This must be set out vividly and presented with force.

Then the sermon on New Year's may voice the call for personal devotion to the realization of this program. It must ask and expect that personal service will be given to realize the call that has been sounded in the sermon. Consecration to new duties must issue from the appeal of the gospel at New Year's.

The sermon will be given either at a regular service of worship on the Sunday nearest the first day of January, or on the Watch Night program of the church for December 31. In the following suggestions both these occasions are kept in mind.

The Crowned Year

*Thou crownest the year with thy goodness:
And thy paths drop fatness* (Ps. 65:11).

The purpose of this sermon is to display the way in which the love and goodness of God have crowned the year. It might also be used at Thanksgiving.

Display this in the wealth of nature. The earth has answered to man's toil with riches; the mines have yielded their wealth.

Display this in the realm of friendships and kinships. How much our friends have helped us! How much we have been able

to do for our friends! How the great leaders of the community and nation have blessed us!

Display this in the world of growing knowledge. Each year registers man's larger insight and firmer control of the universe. We learn better how to live with one another.

Display this in the sphere of love and good will, which make headway in spite of apparent setbacks. The program of Christ's kingdom is still the greatest ideal that humanity ever has struggled toward.

A Door Opened

Behold, I have set before thee a door opened (Rev. 3:8).

The figure is graphic. Study its meaning. A door opened before us into what?

Into a deeper appreciation of the meaning and value of life. It is worth while; beautiful; evoking our best efforts.

Into finer and more blessed relations with our fellows. We live in love and kindness and we must be more helpful kinsmen and comrades.

Into richer community service. There are tasks to be done in our own neighborhoods which call for our personal help; we must give ourselves as well as our money.

Into deeper knowledge and experience of Christ. We know God when we know Christ. We know our own souls and the meaning of life when we know Christ. He is the goal of knowledge and the object of love.

The Fascination of the Unknown

For ye have not passed this way heretofore (Josh. 3:4).

Study the incident to get its significance: how did the Israelites attempt the untried way?

Reverently. They followed the ark at a distance. There was no flippancy as they undertook the new tasks. The solemn awe of the occasion was upon them.

Purely. The people sanctified themselves; they put the evil out of their hearts and actions. They humbled their hearts before God and sought pardon for their sins.

Courageously. When they had purified themselves and accepted the new duties reverently they went forward bravely. They honored God enough to trust him. They did not mortgage their future triumph by fear.

New and Old

Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matt. 13:52).

This text outlines the principle of development which runs through all life and is especially worthy of consideration when the relation of the old and the new is called into consideration at New Year's.

Not the new alone. The new is agreeable and desirable. It is necessary in order to true growth. But it is also hazardous. It often leads to excess and failure. To think of it alone on New Year's is to fail to estimate the forces that work out true development.

Not the old alone. The old is also desirable and agreeable. It, too, is necessary in order to true growth. What humanity has learned in the progress of the centuries must not be thrown aside. But the old alone is hazardous. It tends to fetter freedom. It obscures the vision necessary to fresh discovery of truth.

The new *and* the old. Each needs the other. The new ought to grow out of the old. It is nourished by the old. It completes the old. The old ought to find its complete expression in the new. It must grow into the new. Thus each complements the other. Such a balanced relation insures true progress.

In many churches the sermon on New Year's will be a part of a service

held until after midnight on the last evening of the year and often called *Watch Meeting* or *Watch Night*. It is one way of "watching the old year out and the new year in." The two suggestions that follow are made in view of such a Watch Meeting.

Watch!

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch (Mark 13:37).

"Eternal vigilance is the price of life." Note the perils against which we are to be constantly on guard:

External. Those arising from the situation in which we are found; materialism; envy; greed. The struggle for physical life must not assume such predominance that it dethrones the struggle for the spirit.

Those arising from our comradeships. Personal influence potent and constant; watch the influence of our friendships on our choices and motives.

Internal. Watch the master-motives. Selfish purposes tend to hold the entire field and drive out motives which regard the good of others.

Low forms of life look attractive. Envy and lust are constantly in action assaulting the soul. Watch the coarse and vulgar. Keep the brutal in subjection.

How to cultivate watchfulness. Decide to watch, stick it out; in time the habit will increase. But the will must be constantly alert. The battle never will be over.

"Ring Out, Wild Bells"

Use canto 106 of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* for the text. Have this printed or reproduced in some way so that copies may be in the hands of the people. Study it carefully; make an analysis; condense the points if thought desirable; then prepare material for running comment on it. The items are:

1. Old *vs.* New.
2. False *vs.* True.

3. Grief *vs.* Resignation.
4. Riches *vs.* Poverty.
5. Partisanship *vs.* Nobleness.
6. Sin *vs.* Goodness.
7. Civic Pride and Slander *vs.* Common Love of Good.
8. Foul Disease *vs.* Health.
9. War *vs.* Peace.
10. *The Christ that is to be.*

Preaching on the Day of Prayer

The custom of observing either the Day of Prayer for schools and colleges or the Week of Prayer is not so prevalent in many churches as it once was. Nevertheless almost every church year sees the recurrence of a day or season set apart for intercession and it is necessary to reckon with this in the survey of the occasions on which a particular sermon may be called for.

The danger of unreality must be guarded against in a sermon on this occasion. A preacher must be sure that he is not appealing for something in which he does not himself profoundly believe and which is warranted by his own practice. Captain Bertalot, Waldensian chaplain with the Italian forces, in describing an interview with a dying soldier said that the man kept fast hold of his hand and looked him through and through as if he were determined to know whether the chaplain believed every word that he was speaking. He felt that he could say no word to the wounded comrade unless he believed it himself to the uttermost. And in no less degree this seriousness of purpose and conviction must lie behind the sermon on the Day of Prayer.

There are at least three factors in the preacher's purpose as he handles this theme.

Prayer must be made a real part of the religious life and its energies must be revealed. Some years ago Sir Oliver Lodge challenged Christians to return to the conception of prayer as "a mighty engine of achievement," and to trust it in the working out of the Christian program of life. In some way we must restore this consciousness and confidence to our churches. The sermon on the Day of Prayer may help in this direction.

Something must be done also to indicate the subjects of prayer in order that there may be guidance given to the people who are to pray. Direction is necessary. The disciples who asked Jesus to teach them how to pray voiced a perpetual need of the church.

Then the sermon on the Day of Prayer ought to encourage the habit of prayer by indicating ways in which it may be cultivated. If it has fallen out of the practice of the modern church too much it may also be restored by appeals and directions of the right kind. The preacher will make no mistake by giving exceedingly definite suggestions and counsels. What is needed is concrete and workable directions.

Our Source of Power

These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren (Acts 1:14).

The making of a new world was committed to a little group of disciples. They needed power. They sought and found it in prayer.

Their prayer was *inclusive*. The disciples, men and women, all of them, prayed. No one stayed out.

Their prayer was *united*. With one accord they asked for one great gift, power

to realize the meaning and mission of the gospel in their own lives and for the whole world.

Their prayer was *persistent*. They did not see the immediate results which they desired. But they kept on praying in resolute faith.

Their prayer was *victorious*. In time results larger than anyone would have expected followed from their work. Prayer proved itself to be a power.

A Call to Prayer

I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity (I Tim. 2:1, 2).

The primacy of prayer. It is given first place in the needs of the Christian fellowship. More than wealth or knowledge or power Christians need the practice of prayer.

The variety of prayer. Silent, oral, ejaculatory, formal, private, public. By word and by acts.

The range of prayer. "All men" includes the widest possible variety of interests and needs. Especially leaders of all kinds are mentioned because of their power.

The results of prayer. A tranquil life, free from the selfishness and fret of average living. Full of good deeds. Dignified and noble. Prayer creates character.

Prevailing Prayer

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

This seems like a reckless promise. It guarantees too much. But study the conditions on which the promise is based. What kind of a will is expressed in the prayer that prevails?

It abides in Christ. There is most intimate personal union between the one

who prays and Christ. Purposes are identified; the very nature is shared.

Christ abides in it. The union of wills is mutual, intimate, and constant. The ruling motives of Christ have been accepted as our ruling motives.

What will be the requests of such a person? Certainly nothing selfish or unworthy of Christ. Only the best will be sought by one who is united with Christ.

The final fulfilment of such prayer is promised. It will be done in God's way. It may not come about as we would choose or determine; but the will of anyone who is vitally united with Christ in motive and desire must finally be accomplished because it is the will of Christ and that cannot fail.

Prayer for Success

And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; And establish thou the work of our hands upon us; Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it (Ps. 90:17).

Is it right to pray for the success of our work?

Our work has supreme value to ourselves. We put our very selves into it. Our work is valuable to God. He needs it for the success of his own work.

Therefore it is right to pray for success. That it may not be fleeting but may be established. We want permanence; God alone can give it.

The favor of God is the warrant for all our expectation of success. In the end it is the love and beauty of God that insures the realization of our ideals.

Preaching on Washington's and Lincoln's Birthdays

Probably both of these occasions need not be observed each year by especial recognition from the pulpit; but one of them will doubtless call for recognition. Therefore the following suggestions are made in reference to both occasions, since they are so closely

akin that individual treatment of the two is unnecessary. The Sunday next preceding the anniversary is the day to be observed. There are two lines of treatment appropriate to these occasions: one, to make the sermon biographical or appreciative; the other, to turn the occasion into an opportunity to preach on the larger implications of patriotism and leadership in the higher life of the people.

Following the first suggestion, the danger is that the sermon will lack freshness and vital meaning. For example, it might seem superfluous to preach on the life and character of Washington. So far as making any contribution to our knowledge in this field, it is obviously impossible to do so; but the career and character of Washington were so vital and significant that it is profitable to make them the theme of preaching often. The memory of the people needs to be refreshed.

The life of Abraham Lincoln is especially rich in material for preaching. Enough time has elapsed since his death to enable the world to estimate the meaning of his character and work. The preacher will find fresh matter for his thought in *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*, by William E. Barton.¹ The spiritual message of the great president is growing clearer and ought to be given fully to the people in the sermon on the Sunday before the anniversary of his birth.

The second method of treatment is to direct the attention of the people to the subject of personal leadership, its necessity in a democracy and the character of the great leader. The

sermon may also take up some of the more urgent movements or problems in civic life, although this may be reserved more appropriately for the Sunday nearest to July 4. If the preacher discusses a public question in this sermon let him be sure of his facts. Often harm is done by wild statements made in the interests of a good cause. Never attack a civic evil without such a degree of accurate and pertinent facts in your possession as will make your position impregnable under close examination by opponents.

This kind of preaching takes courage. It is easy enough to flay evils that are far away and hypothetical, but when these very objects of warranted attack are represented in the persons of your heaviest financial supporters the problem is difficult. The pulpit is charged with being in bondage to the financial powers of the community; the charge is, we believe, seldom valid. But the problem of the public-spirited and courageous preacher is no small one when he is forced to attack intrenched evil in his own congregation. His critics seldom appreciate the weight of this responsibility and the difficulty in the discharge of the duty.

The following suggestions are appropriate to the discussion of leadership on Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays.

Leadership and Democracy

*For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah (Judg. 5:1).*

The conditions of a growing and happy state are reflected here. The principle involved is valid in all times.

¹ New York: Doran. \$4.00.

The people volunteered willingly. In a democracy no permanent advance can be registered that is higher than the level of the popular life and ideal. To be permanent any public policy must have the majority of the people behind it. Legislation reflects the common judgment and must have its sanction for enforcement.

The leaders assumed responsibility. The danger in a democracy is that the people will remain an ineffective mob because they lack direction and control. Someone must interpret the popular will and lead in practical programs for its realization.

Seek practical applications of this principle in community and national life.

The Leader's Place

And he that sounded the trumpet was by me (Neh. 4:18).

The walls of Jerusalem were being built. The great task called for construction and defense at the same time. This made the task of leadership doubly necessary and difficult.

Nehemiah was the head of the enterprise. He had taken upon himself responsibility for the direction of the work. There must be one responsible head of every great enterprise. The success or failure of it will depend largely upon his personality.

Associated with him were his assistants. He could not attend to all the details. There must be those who would sound the alarm whenever danger came near. Division of labor and responsibility were necessary.

Organized leadership and popular responsibility assured the success of the great work. It demanded that some duties should be assumed and that some privileges should be surrendered. Individualism must be yielded up for the common good.

What bearing have these principles on the problems of life in America today?

The Hole in the Wall

Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for

they say, Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken the land (Ezek. 8:12).

State the historical situation. Matters were going badly in the state and in popular life. There was a reason.

The peril of intrigue and secret treachery on the part of those who ought to be the true leaders of the people. Often political parties maintain an appearance of opposition while they are secretly dividing the spoils of campaigns.

Intrigue thinks that it is safe. It walls up the doors; but it invariably leaves the hole in the wall. Honorable appearance cannot permanently mask evil action.

Somebody will find the hole in the wall. The sin of false leaders will be uncovered. Their shame is all the greater because their obligation was so great.

False leaders are essentially atheists. They say: God is far away; God has forgotten. Faithful leaders believe that God is near and that he knows and cares. Religion is essential to the highest leadership.

Beginning the Battle

Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? And he answered, Thou (I Kings 20:14).

A battle is on. The right and the wrong are engaged in conflict. The Kingdom of Christ and the reign of evil are in mortal combat. The world is not a place where the issues are nicely balanced and men may be indifferent. The right must be fought for.

Someone must take the leadership and begin the battle for righteousness. The issues hang on the readiness of those who see the truth to come to its defense.

Who must begin the battle for truth? It is easy to look around and estimate the responsibility of others. But that is not the manly attitude.

You must begin the battle. Washington and Lincoln saw the need of leadership and they laid aside ease and safety and took up the task. The modern world needs the same high-spirited leadership.

Preaching on Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday stands at the beginning of Holy Week with its message of triumph and hope. It is interpreted, inevitably, in the light of the days that followed it with tragic swiftness; but as an occasion for preaching it is a day of victory. All preaching ought to be hopeful and confident. But especially on Palm Sunday this note is consistent; nothing else would fit the occasion.

There are two ways in which to handle the subject of the sermon on Palm Sunday. One is to treat the history itself graphically; to describe the events; to show how they had their part in the experience and mission of Jesus; to make it a part of the life of our Lord that was vital and blessed. In order to do this a preacher must take every means at hand to quicken his imagination until he will appreciate and interpret the occasion. Study pictures; read descriptions; and think over the details of the day's doings until they will actually move before your mind. Then the actual scene will live in the sermon. Be sure, above all else, to make this a real event in the life of Jesus that had concrete reality to him.

The other method of treatment is to open up the spiritual truths that flow naturally from the experiences of Palm Sunday. What is the place of victory in Christian experience? How are Christian victories to be won? What are real and apparent triumphs? How much can the opinion of the people be trusted? All these and many more questions flow from the considerations of the principles that may be derived from the study of Palm Sunday as a part of the life of Jesus.

We must be sure that the principles that we draw from the scene are really warranted by what happened. Then we must be exceedingly thoughtful in our application of them to our modern needs and problems. Insight and accuracy are imperative in the preparation of this sermon.

More Than Conquerors

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Rom. 8:37).

The Christian life is one of final victory. In spite of occasional defeats and discouragements, the Christian is a conqueror. Christ enables us to win:

The victory over sin. Not merely forgiveness for sin, but actual power over the tendency to sin. Christ transforms the soul in its dominant desires.

The victory over doubt. Christ clears up the gloomy uncertainties as to what life means, both here and after death. True faith is Christian trust.

The victory over hate. All jealousy and scorn cuts at the heart of life. Through Christ we enter the realm of good-will and love, where men do each other good and not evil all the days of their lives.

The victory over the fear of death. Death is no longer an object of dread to a Christian. He knows that the spirit is immortal and so he is ready to meet the end of his earthly life in the certainty that it marks only the beginning of his larger and better life with the Father.

The Inevitable Master

Behold how ye prevail nothing, lo, the world is gone after him (John 12:19).

Men oppose the mastership of Christ. His moral and spiritual claims contradict the selfish and wicked programs of men. Therefore, inevitable conflict.

This opposition is finally futile. In the end right must overcome wrong; love must

conquer hate. It will take long time and steady struggle; but the final issue is with truth.

The world is slowly following Christ. He was a Teacher from a little town centuries ago; but his perfect word matched by his perfect life is conquering the world.

Is Christ your Master? How can you make him so more completely? How can we help our country to follow the inevitable Christ?

Hosanna

Hosanna in the highest (Matt. 21:9).

Describe the scene. Picture the acclamation. The word means, "Save, we pray." It is the beginning of the acclaim which must be rendered to the world's Savior.

Humanity's supreme need is redemption from sin. Both the effects of sin and sin itself must sometime be removed from the world. To work for this is the greatest task that can inspire us.

Christ is the world's Redeemer from sin. In some way, through faith in him, power comes into us and we are saved. The fact can be proved by millions of witnesses. The explanations are many; the truth and the experience are one.

The world needs on this Palm Sunday to call upon its one Savior. There are no devices or programs that man has made which will do for the world what Christ will do if he is given the right of way in modern life. The Victor of the world is the Christ to whom the people cried Hosanna.

Preaching on Easter

Easter is the supreme festival of joy in the Christian calendar. Christmas stands for the lowly beginning of the Great Life; but Easter celebrates its coronation. The whole Christian message is assured because of the event which is commemorated by Easter. Therefore it is of paramount importance

that the sermon on Easter Sunday should be pitched to the keynote of gladness and triumph.

This sermon may be somewhat cramped in point of time on account of the music which is appropriate to an Easter service. In view of this limitation the Easter sermon ought to be most carefully prepared and earnestly delivered. It must be adequate to the sublime theme and exalted temper of the day. Never trust the mood of the hour for inspiration, thereby apologizing for any carelessness in the thorough work which must be put into the Easter sermon. The occasion and the subject alike call for the most painstaking diligence.

The appropriate subjects are many, but they may be classified satisfactorily under these three heads:

1. *The resurrection of Christ.*—Naturally a preacher will not indulge in a long defense of the resurrection of Christ at an Easter Sunday service; but it is altogether fitting that he should state some of the chief grounds for the faith which has been held so long, so steadfastly and with such blessed results by the Christian people. There are many lines of argument that are pertinent and convincing; but the most cogent to the modern mind will probably be the one derived from the restoration of the faith of the apostles. They had given everything up and were scattered in dismay. Then suddenly something took place which is explained on the ground of their utter conviction that their Master was living again. There must have been an adequate cause for the resurrection of their dead faith; the actual resurrection of their living

Lord is the only cause that can account for their experience. We may approach the argument with confidence and set it out with clearness.

2. *The assurance of immortality.*—From the Christian point of view the best approach to the general fact of immortality is through the experience of Jesus. He expresses the ideal of human nature and death could not hold him. This does not embrace the range of the argument; but it is one of the strongest in itself and the one finally affirmative to Christians. But the general arguments are many. One of the clearest statements of the matter is Fosdick's *The Assurance of Immortality*.¹ We believe that the resurrection of Jesus should be stressed more; but the argument from the yearning or the capacity for eternal life will appeal to those to whom the resurrection of Jesus is not yet convincing. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* yields rich harvest in this field.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is.

3. *The practical issues of immortality.*—One of the most cutting criticisms of the Christian people is the statement of Dr. William Osler, that, however much the doctrine of immortality may be believed, his medical practice had convinced him that almost all its adherents lived and died as if it were not so. What we need is to bring the mighty truth over into the sphere of daily living and make it do

work and get results there. If we are children of God and the heirs of a deathless life then conduct must be modified by that fact and character must be created according to its imperial demands. The sermon on Easter Sunday ought to present the practical issues of the truth that is celebrated on the day. It will not be enough to validate the records of the resurrection or to convince men and women that they are immortal. We need help to live as deathless children of God and the preacher on this high day must bring it to us.

Our Living Lord

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead (II Tim. 2:8).

Paul is trying to bring the reality of Christ to the mind and memory of his friends; so he puts in the foreground the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

Study the effect of this faith upon the convictions of the disciples. See it change them into a group of men and women fired by an assurance for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives.

Study how they preached this as the central fact in their faith. They were sure that Jesus was living in a different way from that in which anyone else lived.

Study the way in which conscious loyalty to a living Lord transformed their own lives. Paul is an example. The change that came to pass in him was typical.

Study the testimony of millions of Christians since the days of the apostles who affirm that they are sure that Christ lives and that they have relations with him in the life of the spirit.

All this evidence converges to establish the fact that Jesus is still the living Master of souls.

¹ The Macmillan Co., 1913.

Newness of Life

Like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

Interpret this text by the study of the words "like as" and "so."

How was Christ raised through the glory of the Father?

Out of weakness into strength. He had only a human body and a mortal life before Easter; after it he had power and eternal years for the accomplishment of his purposes. So we may rise into new strength in Christ.

Out of sacrifice into the rewards of sacrifice. His whole life was spent in the lavish gift of himself to others; after Easter he began to see the rewards of his labor. He had thousands of loyal followers and defenders within a few years.

Out of an earthly life into a spiritual life. He lived bravely and well on earth; but he had to contend with the conditions of humanity. After Easter he was in full possession of his spiritual powers. Easter ought to give us new spiritual possessions and powers.

Earthly and Heavenly Images

As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (I Cor. 15:49).

Many ancient readings warrant the translation *let us also bear the image of the heavenly*. Thus the text is both a promise and an exhortation. We regard it as both an assurance and a command.

It is like the seed and the living plant that grows out of it. The beginnings of the heavenly life are wrapped up in the earthly. The old must die in order that the new may find life.

The material body fits the needs of the spirit while it is living in the physical world and meeting the strains of this temporal situation. The spiritual body will fit the needs of the soul that is free from the conditions of physical living.

The physical body is the instrument of the soul to do its human tasks; it is a house, a garment, an agent. So there will be another body for the spirit when it is free from earth, and by means of it the spirit will still do the will of God.

Always it is the spirit that is supreme and we must keep it in control of the body. Then it will be ready for the new and glorious body which will be its possession after death.

The following is an appropriate quotation: "A reasonable person does not build a violin, with infinite labor gathering the materials and shaping the body of it, until upon it he can play the compositions of the masters, and then in a whim of chance caprice smash it into bits. Yet just this the universe seems to be doing if immortality is false" (Fosdick, *The Assurance of Immortality*, p. 13).

The Risen Life

If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above (Col. 3:1).

Easter is not merely the resurrection day of Jesus Christ. It stands for the rising of all Christians to new life on higher levels in union with Him.

Physical. Allegiance to Christ and the new life in Him brings us into physical soundness and tone, higher than we enjoyed before. It makes us more temperate and happy. We are *better* insurance risks.

Mental. Christians are inspired to think more clearly and on higher themes because of their loyalty to Christ. The noblest activities of the human mind have been inspired by Christ.

Emotional. The deepest, noblest feelings of which the human spirit is capable are called into being as we think about Christ and enter into the world that is created for the soul in union with Him.

Moral. Christ is the creator of the highest moral standards and aims. He furnishes the amplest power to help us

attain them. Righteous living in all its best forms is the gift of Christ to the world.

Spiritual. The Christian is most keenly conscious of God, of the soul, of immortality. The reality of the spirit cannot be doubted by any disciple of the living, spiritual Christ.

Easter bids us enter into this highest realm of desire and achievement. It assures us that we shall have the power given us to grow into still higher reaches of attainment.

Preaching on Mother's Sunday

On the second Sunday in May it has become quite the custom to observe Mother's Sunday, with a sermon appropriate to the occasion and often the use of flowers in some way in the service.

The matter lends itself to preaching. There is no more tender and beautiful subject for a sermon than some aspect of a mother's love and care for her children. There is abundant material for the discourse; the mood of the day is encouraging; the preacher can throw himself into his sermon with a full heart.

Nevertheless it is necessary to observe a degree of caution just because the subject is so beautiful and so full of sentiment. We must not be betrayed into effusive sentimentality. This is what is sometimes called the use of the "sob stuff." The slang is harsh, but the idea is important. Frequently a preacher yields to the temptation to provoke the tears whose wiping away gives such a delicate satisfaction to fervid speakers. And it is unworthy the ideal or the work of the true preacher to do this. Sentiment must come into the sermon on Mother's Sunday. But it must be genuine and it must be reserved. If the tears come into the eyes of some who listen, let the preacher

lay no unction to his soul on that account. Let every illustration, every reference to actual life, every appeal be genuine through and through. Manufactured stories will not serve the purpose of this sermon. Every item in it must be wholesome, healthy, vital.

The following suggestions are given to indicate seed-thoughts appropriate to the occasion under discussion:

The Shelter of Mother's Arms

Carry him to his mother (II Kings 4:19).

The incident. When the little boy grew sick he was with his father and the men in the fields; then he was hurried to the haven of his mother's arms.

Mothers are ready and waiting for hurt and weary children. The world is like the burning oriental sun that struck the lad in the field; it hurts us; there is just one place where we know we can go if our mother is living; she will be ready to take us home.

Mothers understand. The one great fact about the mother-heart is its perfect sympathy. Mothers seem never to forget what it means to be a child. They feel *with* their children. They have the wonderful power to enter into life and share it.

Mothers are patient. No one else does for weak childhood what mothers do for it constantly and without the least complaint. They wait and watch and never despair.

Mothers help. Their love grows so practical! They seem to understand what will bring the most comfort and relief at just the right place. Mother-love is a great medicine.

A Box from Home

Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice (I Sam. 2:19).

Samuel was away from home in the school of the prophets. His one great day

of all the year was when his father and mother came on the annual pilgrimage and brought him the box from home. And the one rich thing in the box was the little coat that Hannah made each year for her boy.

What did this coat mean to Hannah as she stitched it carefully? She sewed love into every seam; she wrought her prayers into the garment along with her thread. How she must have held it up each year and rejoiced to think that she was making it larger for the growing boy! How happy she was when she thought that it would keep him warm in a long night when he watched to see that the lamps did not go out at the shrine! Her whole soul was in the coat.

What did the coat mean to Samuel as he wore it? It made him anticipate the time when his mother would come again. He did his work all the better because he was reminded of her love and hopes for his future. So it became to him truly a sacrament, that is a sign of an invisible grace.

Jewels and Crowns

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, And chains about thy neck (Prov. 1:8,9).

Note the difference between law and instruction. One refers to the body of principles by which right living is guided. The other, to the constant explanation and illustration of those principles which make them reasonable and familiar. Both are necessary.

Loyalty to the teaching and training of parents in a good home are the jewels and the crown that beautify and ennoble the wearer. The true grace and dignity of life consist in fidelity to such truths as a father and mother impart to their children.

Three Generations of Believers

The unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also (II Tim. 1:5).

Faith is a gift and an achievement; it is also an inheritance. It cannot be taught; it has to be caught. It is transmitted in words, in deed, and chiefly in the spirit or temper of others. We have to make it our own in order really to possess it.

Faith grows and changes with each possessor and with every generation. The faith of Eunice was not precisely that of Lois; that of Timothy was unlike either. We must expect change. It is a sign of growth.

Making good with the faith of our mother. Not merely by repeating her creed. Realization of mother's faith must be the repetition of its spirit in actions. The loyalty that she expressed in her faithful life must also be expressed in ours.

Preaching on Memorial Day

The Sunday nearest to May 30 is generally observed as a memorial not only to those who have fallen in the great wars but also to all who have gone from the families of the church. It is therefore fitting that the sermon on this Sunday should be concerned with a subject appropriate to the temper of love and memory.

The preacher will see in this occasion an opportunity to exalt the ideals of noble living, loyalty to truth, and personal sacrifice in the interests of truth and justice. There is no day on which the appeal for such ideals is more suited to the occasion. Memorial Sunday ought not alone to call the minds of the people back to solemn griefs and lovely memories, but also forward to brave and unselfish action that will realize the purpose for which those whose memories we hallow lived and died.

There is no finer example of the spirit of the sermon on Memorial Sunday than is found in the great

Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln. It breathes the air of gratitude for the past and high resolution for the future. It is not to be used as a model in a rhetorical way; but in its conception of the fitting words for such a day it leaves nothing to be desired.

The fact of immortality and the message of Christian comfort and hope lie behind the sermon on Memorial Day. There is a wealth of consolation and sustaining hope in the Christian message that is not used as it ought to be. If it can be brought to the people on this day of tenderest meaning to hearts and homes it will fulfil its great purpose. Especially since the Great War, although the losses in America are not to be compared with those that Europe has suffered, the hearts of men and women are sorely in need of comfort and peace.

On Memorial Sunday it is also appropriate that we emphasize the value of personality and the obligation which should be recognized for the life and work of those who have lived useful lives and done worthy work in the world. The sermon on Memorial Sunday will be designed to inspire the ideals of those who are to bear the burden of the world's affairs as well as to honor those who have died. If it can be made clear that life is worth the best efforts of which our souls are capable it will be a fitting service to render the memory of the blessed dead.

The Light of a Good Life

But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, That shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18).

The blessedness and beauty of memory, especially as it dwells upon the meaning of a good life.

A good life is like the sunlight. It is silent and full of creative power. It makes no noise; but it is full of the energy that calls life into expression and sustains every living thing. This is the way a good man's influence works upon his age.

As the light increases from dawn to noon, so the power and beauty of a good life grows steadily. We do not know how fully human character has impressed the world until the man has gone from his material relationships. We appreciate Lincoln more now than was possible even ten years after his death.

The end of a good life is perfection. The great desires of the spirit will not be mocked. All that we saw ourselves capable of becoming when we were at our best we shall finally become when God's will has been fully done in us.

From Bitterness to Blessing

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah [bitter].

And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters (Exod. 15:23, 27).

This change from the bitter waters of Marah to the beauty and health of the oasis at Elim is a symbol of the way in which God leads us from the bitterness of great sorrow to the comfort and peace of accepted grief.

How does this take place? By the lesson of time and experience as we learn the meaning of sorrow in the passage of the years. By the comfort of friends and the ministry of thought. By the experience of Christ as the living Master.

These lessons we learn as we wait patiently, trust fully, work for others faithfully.

The Comfort of Infinite Love

I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that art afraid of man that shall

die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and hast forgotten Jehovah thy Maker, that stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth (Isa. 51:12, 13).

The world sorely needs comfort. Not only in time of death and disaster; but constantly. Individuals must meet bitter grief; nations are distracted and afflicted.

Comfort may come from men in a measure. But the length of man's years, the limits of his weakness, the dearth of his wisdom make his comfort partial.

God is the Source of comfort. This is due to the greatness of the divine power, the insight of the divine wisdom, the wealth of the divine sympathy, the healing strength of the divine love.

It is necessary therefore to point men to God if they are to be steadied through the strain of sorrow and upborne in the stress of disappointment.

Unshaken Foundations

Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things that are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe (Heb. 12:27, 28).

In this time when it seems as if the world were almost shaken to pieces, what is the "kingdom that cannot be shaken" which we receive?

The everlasting reality of religion. This is innate in humanity. It cannot be destroyed even by violent changes.

The fact of the Father God. The God of Jesus is still the Sovereign Ruler of the universe.

The triumph of right in a moral universe. The God whom we find in Christ is good and his will must conquer in the end.

The power of an endless life. Immortality is a truth by which to shape daily conduct. The soul is deathless.

The redemption of the world through Christ. While the explanations of this truth may change the fact abides forever.

Preaching on Children's Sunday

The second Sunday in June is generally set apart as Children's Sunday and the service of worship is so planned that the children of the church school are present and often take a considerable part of the service themselves. This is one of the happiest occasions of the church year. It comes at a season when the world is physically beautiful. Then the sight of the children of the church is always inspiring. The interest and affection of the people is called out to the maximum. It is one of the preacher's high days.

A sermon, in the strict sense of the word, is generally well-nigh impossible on this Sunday. The time will not permit the discussion of any large subject in a thorough way, even if it were appropriate or desirable. The tactful preacher will not attempt, therefore, to furnish a finished discourse on Children's Sunday. He will prepare instead a "talk" especially adapted to the apprehension and needs of the little people. The subject of preaching to children is one that demands a department by itself in the field of homiletics. We cannot, in the space at hand, even present briefly the general principles to be observed. The literature of preaching contains a gratifying list of books to only a few of which we refer by titles, instead of suggesting texts and seed-thoughts.

Children's Object Story-Sermons, by Otis Tiffany Barnes (3d ed.). Revell. \$1.00.

Little Ten Minutes, by Frank T. Bayley. Revell. \$1.25.

The Children's Hour, by Stuart Nye Hutchison. Revell. \$1.25.

Church Year Sermons for Children, by Phillips E. Osgood. Philadelphia: Jacobs. \$1.25.

The volume by Mr. Osgood, vicar of the Chapel of the Mediator in Philadelphia, is especially interesting and will be suggestive on the point of method. The other books are examples of many equally valuable, the titles of which may be found in bibliographies and catalogues.

Preaching on Independence Sunday

The Sunday preceding the Fourth of July is generally observed as an especial occasion when a sermon on patriotism and civic duty is appropriate. This we have called Independence Sunday, although the name is not well established in current usage.

Preaching on patriotism has been called for so extensively during the past few years that it might seem unnecessary to refer either to the difficulty involved in the right use of such national occasions and opportunities or the principles that should be observed in civic preaching.

Only for the sake of emphasizing certain laws which are quite familiar do we sum them up briefly here:

Remember that love of country is instinctive to every normal person. Patriotism is like the love of home and the deep sanctions of religion in that it rests forever in the constitution of human nature. Therefore the grounds of the noblest appeals are all at hand in life at its normal levels.

Never mistake patriotism for boasting and saber-rattling. The spirit that rehearses our national assets before the Almighty is not the true patriotic temper. The real lover of his country is reverent and humble in heart. He has no boasts with which to approach the God of nations.

No patriotism is genuine that is merely partisan or provincial. The danger in civic preaching is that it will grow narrow and intolerant. No valid national interests can be realized apart from the interests of the whole world. The international ideal of patriotism must be defended from the Christian pulpit in these days as never before. The realization of universal humanity is fundamental to the preaching of patriotism.

Naturally a preacher on Independence Sunday will make use of the riches of biographical material that lies at hand for illustration and argument. The lives of Gladstone, Lincoln, Mazzini, Hay, and numerous great prophets and leaders of patriotism ought to be studied in order that the Independence Sunday sermon may be pointed accurately.

It is a Sunday for reserve rather than abandonment. That is, the tendencies in the day itself and in the subject discussed will tend to make the preacher "break loose." Deep feeling fits this occasion; but if one is to guard anywhere let it be at the point of too much rhetoric and oratory.

The following suggestions are made for Independence Sunday:

Patriotic Obligation and Religious Study

Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's (Luke 20:25).

Our country claims our service; Caesar stands for the civil power which we must acknowledge. The Christian faith realizes the right of the state.

God also claims our service. This is the supreme obligation to which we can respond. It takes shape in the duties and privileges of religion.

There is no inconsistency between these two areas of duty. It is possible to be both a faithful citizen and a loyal disciple of Christ.

Religion instead of being inconsistent with patriotism is essential to it. Loyalty to God is the best warrant for loyalty to the state.

Civic duty is one of the noblest spheres in which to complete religion. In patriotism religion comes to a paramount form of practical expression.

Loving Our Country

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy (Ps. 137:5, 6).*

The singer was in exile and therefore under strong temptation to forget his native land; but he kept the fires of his patriotism burning on the altar.

Patriotism may be forgotten under the strain of material gain. The skilled right hand may make one so rich and prosperous that the obligations of citizenship are lost.

But it is more important to love one's native land than to be rich.

Patriotism may be forgotten in happiness and enjoyment. When life grows easy high and noble national ideals are easily forgotten.

Patriotism must rise above these and every other incentive until it masters the soul as a holy passion. Then it keeps the soul alive and is itself kept alive by devoted souls.

Civic Honor and Trust

Ye are holy unto Jehovah, and the vessels are holy. . . . Watch ye and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chiefs . . . in the chambers of the house of Jehovah (Ezra 8:28, 29).

Civic duties are holy tasks. The debauchery of the word "politics" is a national calamity. Public service ought to be a public privilege and honor.

Civic leaders are holy persons. The idea of sanctity has gathered about the priesthood; but it ought also to be associated with public service in affairs of state.

Civic service requires constant watchfulness. When the community is being served it is easy to fall into loose habits. Men will cheat a corporation when they would not cheat a comrade.

Civic service calls for a final accounting before God and man. The same fidelity is called for by the commonwealth that is demanded in the strictest business transaction. It is God as well as man that must be satisfied strictly.